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Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 DHA-05 ACDA-07 OMB-01 TRSE-00
AID-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03
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R 022019Z SEP 77
FM AMEMBASSY ASUNCION
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1020

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASUNCION 3622

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM, PA
SUBJ: TREATMENT OF INDIANS IN PARAGUAY: VISIT OF PROFESSOR ARENS

REF: STATE 191981

1. "GENOCIDE IN PARAGUAY" EDITOR, PROFESSOR RICHARD ARENS OF TEMPLE UNIVERSITY VISITED PARAGUAY FROM AUGUST 18 TO SEPTEMBER 1. THIS FIRST VISIT BY ARENS TO PARAGUAY WAS THE RESULT OF INVITATION BY COL. ALBERTO SAMANIEGO, DIRECTOR OF INDIAN AFFAIRS, TO COME AND OBSERVE THE CONDITIONS OF INDIANS (INDIGENISTAS) FIRST-HAND. PROF. ARENS' BOOK ARGUED THAT THERE IS A DELIBERATE EFFORT TO EXTERMINATE PARAGUAY'S ACHE-GUAYAKI INDIANS.

2. THE EMBASSY MET AND PROVIDED PROF. ARENS WITH EVERY FACILITY REQUESTED IN ORDER TO ENSURE HIM THE OPPORTUNITY TO OBSERVE AND DISCUSS THE SITUATION AS FULLY AS POSSIBLE. DURING HIS TWO-WEEK STAY HE VISITED SEVERAL INDIAN RESERVATIONS, SOME IN REMOTE AREAS. HE ALSO VISITED FILADELFIA, WHERE INDIANS ARE USED AS LABORERS BY MENNONITE FARMERS,AND PUERTO CASADO, WHERE INDIANS WORK FOR A TANNIN EXTRACTION FACTORY. PROF. ARENS ALSO MET TWICE WITH THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE AND PERSONS CONNECTED WITH
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VARIOUS ORGANIZATIONS WHICH DEAL WITH INDIAN AFFAIRS SUCH AS THE IAF-SPONSORED MARANDU II PROJECT.

3. UPON HIS DEPARTURE, PROF. ARENS EXPRESSED HIS APPRECIATION TO THE EMBASSY FOR ITS VERY COMPETENT ASSISTANCE. HE SAID HE WOULD HAVE TO EXAMINE THE MATERIAL AND IMPRESSIONS HE HAD OBTAINED DURING HIS VISIT THOROUGHLY BEFORE REACHING

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ANY FINAL ASSESSMENTS OR CONCLUSIONS. HE DID PROVIDE US, HOWEVER, WITH SOME OBSERVATIONS. HE SAID HE WAS HIGHLY IMPRESSED BY THE PERSONAL QUALITIES OF BOTH COL. SAMANIEGO AND ALBERTO SANTACRUZ, PRESIDENT OF THE INDIAN TRIBES ASSOCIATION. HE INDICATED HE DID NOT FEEL THERE WAS ANY ATTEMPT BY THE GOP TO EXTERMINATE THE ACHE-GUAYAKI OR OTHER INDIANS. HOWEVER, HE FOUND THE INDIAN IS CONSIDERED AN INFERIOR BEING BY MANY PARAGUAYNS BOTH OFFICIALS AND NON-OFFICIALS AND TREATED CALLOUSLY BECAUSE OF THIS. PROF. ARENS WAS ALSO CRITICAL OF THE WAY THE NEW TRIBES MISSION (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST) WAS RUNNING THE INDIAN RESERVATIONS ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT. HE FEELS THAT MALNUTRITION IS WIDESPREAD AMONG THE INDIANS AND THAT THERE IS A GREAT NEED FOR BETTER HEALTH AND SANITARY FACILITIES ON THE RESERVATIONS IN ORDER TO REDUCE THE PRESENT HIGH INCIDENCE OF DISEASE AND INFESTATION WITH PARASITES.

4. PROF. ARENS INDICATED HE WOULD BE IN TOUCH WITH THE IAF'S ANN TERNES AND THE DEPARTMENT FOLLOWING HIS RETURN TO THE U.S.
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